I HIRED A CONTRACT KILLER

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1 EXT. THE LONDON WATERWORKS REGISTRY OFFICE - DAY 1

Desolate street scenes in the heart of London. Fastened to the wall by the Waterworks main entrance is a brass plate with the words: Her Majesty's Waterworks.

A long corridor full of clerks walking back and forth carrying piles of papers, and clients who have lost their way trying to dodge them. The eldest of the clients might have been born in the place. Above one door the sign: Registry Office.

The room measures approximately 60 square metres. 150 centimetres up from the floor, the walls are a dirty blue-grey. Above that, they were once white. Fifteen desks stand in three ruler-straight rows. Above each table hangs a neon light, and behind each desk sits a clerk. They scratch their pens quietly while pouring over the piles of documents covering the desks.

The spring sunlight fights its way into the room through the dirty window, but curiously enough its rays seem to avoid the third desk from the door in the last row. Seated at the desk is Henri Boulanger, the hero of our story. He has recently had his 42nd birthday, but didn't pay the slightest attention to it. Nor did anybody else.

His desk differs from the others only in that it has none of the "small personal items" so characteristic of his colleagues; a photograph of a wife or a girlfriend, a mermaid-shaped paperknife or a model of the Eiffel Tower purchased on a trip to Paris (one of which incidentally played an important role in Crichton's film Lavender Hill Mob). Otherwise the desk is the same kind of battlefield as the others. They fight a losing battle against the documents. Just as Henri is on the brink of dealing with the last of them and passing it on, one of the messengers cruising the room drops a double load on his desk. Not once during his fourteen years here has he had the satisfaction of leaving an empty desk on going home from work. However, this does not seem to have depressed our hero in any way, for his working ethics are not of this world.

When the hands of the clock high on the wall point to lunch hour, the clerks all get up at the same moment, push and shove to the door, and the sudden murmur of voices moves out into the corridor.

A bit later Henri Boulanger walks out of the room with swift steps, head slightly bowed, with no appetite at all.

2 INT. THE LOUNGE OF A NEARBY PUB - DAY 2

In order to discover the reasons for our hero’s detachment we would have to burrow deep into his past, perhaps all the way to his childhood. In any case, he sits alone at his table in the pub lounge, a glass of mineral water and a plate of indeterminate soup in front of him. Most of the men we have met in the office are grouped round three of the tables, talking animatedly. Henri takes part in the conversation in his own expressionless way. Once in a while he turns his face towards the others, smiles a lopsided and somehow mirthless smile when he hears an especially good joke.

3 INT. UNDERGROUND TRAIN FROM CITY CENTRE - EVENING 3

The underground carriage is full of businessmen and clerks all dressed the same who, either sitting down or lurching in the gangway, try to concentrate on their newspapers on their way to the dinner awaiting them in their suburban homes, and a well-deserved rest before the next morning's renewed attack on the unfinished work and the rampart of mean superiors.

There is nothing to distinguish Henri from the rest of the crowd except that, unlike the others, he is not absorbed in any of the capital's numerous evening papers daily reporting vital information about events in society and the world.

4 EXT./INT. HENRI’S APARTMENT - EVENING 4

In a small house (which in real life stands on the corner of Portobello Road and Westbourne Park Road) there are three floors. On the ground floor are some business premises. Their unkempt window provides us with a multitude of misleading clues as to the owner's line of business. Above that are two more floors, each with just one tiny flat. The plaster has faded to a shade of grey and in places fallen off. Above the door to the narrow staircase leading up to the flats shines a bare bulb. In the building across the street is a pub called "The Warwick Castle”.

Henri buys a vac-packed scone, crosses the street, opens the door and climbs the stairs to his flat on the second floor. The flat consists of a small sitting room, an even smaller bedroom, and a kitchen sized somewhere between these two. The window looks out onto the brick wall of the next-door building. The flat is furnished with a minimum of furniture and nothing personal. Everything suggests that it was once, years earlier, rented furnished and that neither the tenant nor the landlord has considered it necessary to do anything to it since.

Henri fills a metal teapot, places it on the gas stove and climbs up a narrow ladder, through a trap door in the hall ceiling onto the roof. We can see that amidst the chimneys he has built a fence round a rooftop terrace measuring a few square metres. The furniture consists of a broken-down garden chair, a packing case acting as a table, and some flower pots. From the base of the chimney he picks up a watering can, pours water on his stunted geraniums, gently removes a couple of dead leaves, returns the can and goes back downstairs, where he drinks his tea and eats his scone at the kitchen table, staring vacantly in front of him.

FADE.

5 INT. OFFICE - AFTERNOON 5

On a perfectly ordinary day one of the messengers arrives at Henri's desk to inform him that the boss, i.e. the head of department, wants to see him. Henri gets up, walks into the corridor and knocks on one of the identical-looking doors. Inside, a female secretary tells him to wait. Carefully, Henri sits on the edge of the chair by the door, placing his superfluous hands in his lap. Fifteen minutes later, a side door opens and he is beckoned in. The door closes behind him.

6 INT. HEAD OF DEPARTMENT'S OFFICE - DAY 6

The office has worn oak parquet, light brown wallpaper with a vague pattern, a metal filing cabinet, a small settee and a table. The secretary takes up a stand at the end of the table, looking expectantly at a dried-up, grey-haired little man of close on sixty almost hidden behind his desk. Henri Boulanger remains standing in the middle of the room, his back to the door.

The Head of Department signs the paper he has been examining, folds it carefully and cuts the blank top half away with a paper knife. Then he opens a drawer, places both halves of the paper in it, shuts the drawer and raises his wandering gaze to Henri.

DEPARTMENT HEAD
As you undoubtedly have heard, the government has seen fit to privatise our establishment. The deal takes effect in the beginning of next month. The new owners demand certain changes in our organisation. So, it is my unpleasant duty to let you know, Mr...

He looks inquiringly at his secretary, who glances at her papers.

SECRETARY
Boulanger, Henri Boulanger.

DEPARTMENT HEAD
... Mr. Boulanger, that redundancies cannot be avoided. You are not a British citizen, are you?

HENRI
No. French.

DEPARTMENT HEAD
I am sure you understand that we have to begin with foreigners.

HENRI
I understand.

A few seconds' silence, interrupted by Henri.

HENRI
When do I have to go?

DEPARTMENT HEAD
As your position for some reason has never been made official, two week's notice is out of the question.

HENRI
Right away?

DEPARTMENT HEAD
If you please.

SECRETARY
Sign this, please.

She places a pre-filled form on the desk. Henri signs it without reading it. The Head of Department gets up and picks up an open box waiting on the corner of his table.

DEPARTMENT HEAD
As a token of our appreciation for your...

SECRETARY
Fifteen.

DEPARTMENT HEAD
...almost fifteen years of devoted service, We're going to give you this gold watch.

He shoves the box at Henri, who is immediately shown out of the room by the Secretary. In the ante-room a clerk sits waiting for his turn. Seeing the secretary, he gets up.

SECRETARY
Otzgenturk?

MAN
Yes, ma'am, Ali Otzgenturk.

His accent raises doubts about his nationality. Henri steps out onto the corridor, having first glanced at a great pile of boxes on the secretary's table containing gold watches, wondering whether they have remembered to demand a reduction, seeing that they have been buying in bulk. When purchasing such a large consignment one should automatically be entitled to one.

Henri rushes back into the room and stops in front of the secretary with a confused expression on his face.

HENRI
It doesn't work, this watch.

SECRETARY
Yes, it does.

7 INT. THE LONDON WATERWORKS REGISTRY OFFICE - AFTERNOON 7

For the rest of the day, Henri sits behind his empty desk, clad in his overcoat quite unnecessarily, not knowing how to leave. Only when two hefty workers come and carry his desk away does he seem to wake up. He gets up, walks down the corridor and out into the street.

8 EXT. THE THAMES, RIVERBANK - AFTERNOON 8

Henri Boulanger has undoubtedly noticed that his social life has not been the liveliest in the city, but some sort of self-preservation instinct has prevented him from accepting the fact that he did not possess a single friend or relative who would be in any way interested in his fate. Or did he?

He stands in front of a modern telephone booth in the middle of a desolate industrial area and leafs furiously through his small, flat phone book. In addition to the number of the Waterworks, all that can be found is the number of Aunt Charlotta, struck out, and a meaningful cross drawn above it.

Henri Boulanger closes the phone book, shoves it into his pocket, takes a step back, looks obliquely to the left and decides to die.

9 INT. HARDWARE STORE - EVENING 9

From a busy street, Henri steps into a large self-service hardware store, walking among the endless rows of shelves until he finds what he is looking for. After lengthy consideration he chooses a rope thick enough to be painless but thin enough to be quick. It is an excellent rope, at the same time both firm and flexible.

SHOPKEEPER
That’s a good one, Sir.

HENRI
Three metres, please.

SHOPKEEPER
Three metres, Sir.

10 INT. THE LANDLADY’S APARTMENT, AT THE DOOR - EVENING 10

Henri knocks on a nameless door in a dark, shabby stairway. The door is opened by a youngish woman dressed in a faded dressing gown, and her eyes tell that she would never be driving in a carriage drawn by two white mares in the Bois de Boulogne park.

HENRI
I came to give notice of the flat.

WOMAN
Why are you... Just like that...

HENRI
I'll travel... I'll move elsewhere. In a week's time you can empty the flat. Throw away everything left in there. Here’s the rent until that.

He gives the woman a few bank notes. She looks at the money and then at Henri.

WOMAN
This makes me very sad.

HENRI
Yes. Thank you for everything.

He turns and starts to climb the stairs to the door of his own apartment. The landlady looks after him until he is out of sight.

Then she steps back into her apartment, closes the door and sits on a simple chair with an expression on her face where we could, if we knew how, read the answer that has been haunting our minds since the preceding dialogue: has there been something between them or is that also only a dream of hers that never came true like her life in general? The last-mentioned we can read from the furnishing of the room.

11 INT. HENRI'S APARTMENT - EVENING 11

In his flat Henri removes his overcoat, walks into the kitchen and opens the packet he has brought with him. Awkwardly he ties a sort of noose on one end of the rope and climbs onto the table. Having tied the other end of the rope to a hook in the ceiling, he slips the noose round his neck, crosses himself, closes his eyes and jumps into the great unknown.

A moment later, he finds himself on the floor. The hook has come off and the plaster is slowly raining down on him like snowflakes in a school play at Christmas. He gets up, brushes the dust from his shoulders and checks the other rooms without finding anything to hang his rope from. Finally his eyes rest on the oven in the kitchen. Quickly, not to give himself any time to think, he opens the oven door, puts his head in the oven and, groping with his right hand, turns on the tap. The gas hisses. Henri finds a more comfortable position and throws himself at the mercy of his Maker. But suddenly the gas stops. After waiting for a moment he takes his head out of the oven, turns the taps and bangs on the pipe. FADE.

12 EXT. HENRI'S APARTMENT - MORNING 12

On a street corner, a black news vendor waves his papers violently about, encouraging passersby to read the latest news about the gas workers' surprise strike. His voice carries two floors up to the small room, waking Henri Boulanger. He lies fully clothed on his bed, with the rope round his neck like a tie and a large kitchen knife in his hand.

He sits up on the edge of the bed, fishes a crushed packet of cigarettes out of his pocket but cannot find any matches. This latest, in itself trivial misfortune seems to depress him even more. Having yanked the rope from round his neck, he gets up and leaves the apartment, turns back, puts the knife on a table and goes on out.

13 INT. A TEA-ROOM - MORNING 13

Henri sits by the window of a small tea-room, looking out of the window into the rainy street, where unfamiliar people hunched under umbrellas are all going their own ways. He gazes past his untouched tea to a newspaper somebody has left on the table. His absentminded eye catches a headline proclaiming the use of hired killers in the Latin American drug war.

The word "contract killers" suddenly catches his attention, and to underline the thought process set in motion by it, and the decision following it, the camera commits a small tracking forward, which will no doubt begin with a jerk and end abruptly.

14 INT. PAWNSHOP, BANK, A TAXI QUEUE - AFTERNOON 14

A. Having found, after a moment's wandering around, a reliable-looking pawnshop, Henri Boulanger pawns his new gold watch. He is given a receipt and £5. B. He walks into a bank. He draws out all his savings, £840 in all, and closes his account.

C. Henri walks to Victoria Station. There he carefully examines the cab drivers waiting for customers. Having found one who differs from the other representatives of this noble profession on the grounds of his uncommonly sly and suspicious appearance, Henri steps into the cab.

15 EXT. EAST END, "HONOLULU BAR" - EVENING 15

The cab drives first along Whitechapel Road away from the city centre, turns into a side street and zigzags along narrow, dirty alleys until it suddenly stops under an occasional street lamp. The driver slides open the glass panel separating him from his passengers and fixes Henri with a look from his small, bloodshot eyes.

DRIVER
I shan't be coming any further, guv. Walk straight ahead and take the second corner left.

(MORE)

DRIVER (CONT'D)
It's what you're looking for.
That'll be six quid for the ride,
and ten for the information.

Henri gets out of the taxi and pays the driver. The cab drives off and is immediately lost from sight.

The evening is chilly and Henri wraps his overcoat closer about him before starting to walk along the street bordered by a fence. Except for a train in the distance, all is quiet. There are only deserted warehouses, abandoned cars and dogs in the area. When the dogs see Henri they slink into the shadows in the side streets. Having followed the driver's instructions round the corner, he sees a couple of dimly lit windows in the darkness, with a bright yellow neon sign above saying: "Honolulu Bar". The bar is situated in the left front corner of an empty factory building.

Henri goes nearer. Soon he hears music and the usual bar noises from inside. He stops a few metres from the door as it suddenly opens and a large man is thrown out into the street by a couple of others. He remains lying, unconscious, where he lands, almost at Henri's feet. Henri steps over him and opens the door.

16 INT. "HONOLULU BAR" - NIGHT 16

Superficially, the bar does not differ much from the archetypal pub on the outskirts of the city, but a glance at the clientele changes everything: compared with them the "Freaks" of Tod Browning look like officers of the Coldstream Guards at the Queen's annual garden party. In the small room turned grey by cigarette smoke there is not one man whose nose hasn't been broken in at least three places. The average height of the customers is approximately seven foot two, and cauliflower ears are more the rule than the exception.

As Henri Boulanger steps in and closes the door behind him, the chaotic hum of voices and clinking of glasses ceases by degrees until complete silence prevails. Everybody stares somewhat incredulously at the small clerk who politely nods to each and everyone jointly and then walks along the opening among the men to the bar. For some reason he seems to be black-and-white. When he reaches the bar he stops, his back to the room.

HENRI
A ginger ale.

Then he turns round and announces to the silence:

HENRI
Where I come from we eat places like these for breakfast.

The silence continues for a couple of seconds. Then everything is as it was before. The hum of voices, the clinking and the brawling continue.

A bottle is placed in front of Henry and he pours liquid into a dirty, chipped glass. On both sides of him, distressingly close, are two hunks of men, only this time from the prettier end of the range, watching him curiously.

Henri half empties his glass, lights a cigarette, glances at one of the men in passing and then talks straight to the row of bottles in front of him.

HENRI
I need a killer.

17 INT. "HONOLULU BAR" BACK ROOM - NIGHT 17

The room is a typical back room of a bar, but furnished as a sort of office. When the door padded with imitation leather leading to the bar is closed, it is almost quiet in here. Henri is placed in a soft armchair opposite a sickly thin man who looks like a village shopkeeper, wearing thick glasses, and the creases in his dark suit so sharp that one could easily slice a Wonderloaf with them. Between them is a sort of smoking table. The men who showed Henri in remain in the room, leaning silently against the door.

MAN
Usually the price for easy cases is a thousand pounds a head. We don’t do politicians or businessmen. Too much hassle. Payment in cash. Delivery within two weeks or your money back. Mutual silence is expected. Still interested?

HENRI
Yes.

MAN
Who's the one you want to get rid of?

From his inside coat pocket Henri digs out an envelope, places it on the table in front of the man and starts to count his money.

The man opens the envelope and takes out a photograph. It shows Henri himself. Henri puts the money on the table.

HENRI
The address is on the back.

Wonderingly, the man shrugs his left shoulder. It seems to be a gesture of extreme astonishment. Al walks round the table, takes the photograph in his big fist and looks at Henri.

MAN
Why don’t you do it yourself, and save your money?

HENRI
I tried but I'm too yellow.

MAN
It’s up to you. But if you change your mind, remember to get in touch with us in time.

HENRI
That won't be necessary, I want to die.

He looks at the men standing by the door, turns towards the man resembling a shopkeeper.

HENRI
Will they be the ones?

AL
We won't harm you, Henry.

Questioningly, he looks at his mate.

AL
Will we, Pete?

PETE
No... Not now we're friends.

MAN
They’re good boys. We'll use a subcontractor.

HENRI
Will you please do it fast. I'm not so brave, you see, and the waiting may well...

MAN
I'll do my best, don’t worry. Nice to do business with you. Goodbye.

AL
C'mon, Henry, we'll buy you a drink.

HENRI
I don’t drink.

PETE
What difference does it make, now?

18 INT. “HONOLULU BAR" - NIGHT 18

Henri stands fast by his principle and sits at a corner table sandwiched between Al and Pete, with a fresh bottle of ginger ale in front of him. His newfound friends have drunk enough to get sentimental.

PETE
Why do you want to die, Henry?

HENRI
For personal reasons.

AL
But life is beautiful...

PETE
It’s a gift from Our Lord.

AL
Think of the flowers and animals and the birds.

PETE
Look at this pretty glass, does it want to die? No way.

He pours the drink down his throat. Henri looks at them, seriously.

HENRI
You don’t understand... I lost my job.

AL
So what, get a new job.

PETE
We don’t work either. Look at us, we're still happy. Follow our example.

AL
We know how to have fun.

HENRI
No... I'm tired. I want to sleep. Goodbye.

He gets up and walks out of “Honolulu Bar”.

19 INT. HENRI’S APARTMENT - DAY, EVENING, NIGHT 19

Henri sits in his apartment and waits. Day fades into evening, evening into night, but nothing happens. He walks to his door, opens it and leaves it ajar in order to make it easier for the killer to enter. Every now and then he hears footsteps, but every time they stop on the lower floor. Increasingly often he stops by the window and watches the lit windows of "The Warwick Castle” across the street. Hunger and thirst be in to bother him. He wasn't prepared to wait this long and therefore omitted to make his usual small purchases.

20 INT. HENRI’S APARTMENT, "THE WARWICK CASTLE" - EVENING 20

When a week has Passed without anything happening, Henri once again stands by his window, watching the beckoning windows of the pub. Although he has lived in his apartment for Seven years, never once has he felt it necessary to visit that establishment which, according to his view of things, was meant for “other” people. Now, however, he picks up a pen and a piece of paper and writes the following message: "In the pub opposite. Henri Boulanger”.

He goes down to the street, pins the note on the door, crosses the street and steps into the warm, smoke-filled room.

21 INT. "THE WARWICK CASTLE" - EVENING 21

Grey as usual, he walks between the tables to the bar and orders a cup of tea, only to be informed that for tea and coffee there are cafés and tea-rooms. This, however, is a public house where alcoholic drinks and the necessary mixers are served. Henri is about to turn away.

Then, suddenly, he seems to realise the ridiculousness of the situation: Is he really going to die without first tasting some of the drinks that seem to fill the lives of so many of his fellow creatures?

HENRI
A whisky, double. And cigarettes.

Receiving his glass, he walks to a corner table, tasting the drink carefully before pouring it straight down his throat. Then he waits for a moment. As he does not feel any effect, he gets himself another drink, and drinks that down, too.

All of a sudden he is drunk. What other explanation could there be for his behaviour when, a moment later, he asks permission to buy a drink for a blonde woman, slightly younger than himself, who having gone round from table to table offering roses for sale finally stops in front of him. Henri acts like a soul possessed: He even looks the woman straight in the eye.

HENRI
What's your name?

WOMAN
Margaret.

HENRI
Sit down.

MARGARET
Why?

HENRI
Because I want. What do you want to drink?

MARGARET
Guinness.

22 EXT. HENRI'S APARTMENT - EVENING 22

Medium close-up of the door with Henri's message pinned to it. Footsteps approach and stop. A hand in a black leather glove and part of the sleeve of a dark blue poplin overcoat appear in the picture. The hand rips the message from the door and vanishes from the picture. In a moment, the steps cross the street and fade away.

23 INT. "THE WARWICK CASTLE" - EVENING 23

The woman has placed her unsold roses on a seat between them. Henri seems to have sobered up after his first inebriation. Evidently they have discussed all kinds of things. The situation is somehow natural.

MARGARET
Henri, why did you leave France?

HENRI
They didn’t like me there...

His gaze turns inward for an instant and could, if we so wished, tell us some painful memories.

We are witnessing "love at first sight”, though neither of our characters knows it yet. However, there is some reluctance in the way Margaret looks at her watch in order to take her leave.

MARGARET
I must go now.

HENRI
Don’t go.

MARGARET
I better.

HENRI
Can we... see again?

MARGARET
Give me your telephone number, and I will call you.

HENRI
I haven't got a phone.

MARGARET
Me neither. Where do you work?

HENRI
Nowhere, they fired me.

MARGARET
For drinking?

She looks pointedly at the six empty glasses in front of him.

HENRI
No.

Gravely, Margaret looks him in the eye, smiles quietly to herself and then writes her address on a small piece of paper which Henri puts in his pocket.

HENRI
Do you live alone?

MARGARET
Why do you ask?

HENRI
I'm sorry... I'm not used to talking.

MARGARET
I can hear that.

Margaret gets up, picks up her flowers, puts them under her arm, leans over and plants a delicate kiss on Henri's forehead.

MARGARET
Goodbye, Henri.

24 EXT. "THE WARWICK CASTLE" - EVENING 24

Outside the pub window stands a dark figure whose face we cannot see. He sees the woman get up, kiss the man on the cheek and walk across the room. Then the man, too, his victim, gets up and walks towards the door. The killer backs out of the picture.

Stunned, Henri emerges into the street, pauses for a moment trying to catch a glimpse of Margaret, but she has already disappeared. He crosses the street and walks up to the door leading to his apartment. While pushing the key in the lock he notices that his message is missing, and suddenly remembers. He turns round to see a figure approaching along the almost dark building. In his panic, Henri almost fails to get the door open. The footsteps draw nearer. Finally Henri manages to get into the stairwell and slams the door shut behind him. Somebody stops outside. There is a knock on the door. Henri no longer wants to die; he runs up the stairs and locks himself in his apartment. A moment's silence, then the doorbell rings, long and demanding. Henri returns to the stairwell and disconnects the buzzer.

Upstairs, he locks his door and waits, petrified. Fifteen minutes tick by with nothing happening. Suddenly he hears the footsteps again: this time, on the roof. They stop above the hall, somebody tries to drag the trapdoor open. The flimsy bolt is torn loose and falls onto the floor.

Henri does not just stand there waiting but runs down the stairs and out into the street, where he does not stop, heart pounding, until he reaches the next corner. Then he turns back to look; lights are on in the apartment, a dark figure is standing at the window and seems to be staring straight at him. Henri starts running again.

25 EXT. RAILROAD BRIDGE - NIGHT 25

After running a while, Henri stops to get his breath back on a railway bridge moistened by rain and badly lit. When he raises his eyes we see his face become filled with fearful confusion. We see a man, twice Henri’s size, standing opposite him. They stare at each other for a long time. A train rattles under the bridge.

MAN
Have you got a cigarette to spare?

Henri slowly digs a cigarette pack out of his pocket and gives it to the man. When he starts to pick out a cigarette, Henri turns and runs away. The man doesn’t follow.

26 EXT. HOTEL - NIGHT 26

Henri stands outside a small hotel, freezing, staring inside. He searches his pockets but can find no more than about ten pounds. Then he finds Margaret's address in his hand. There are no cabs to be seen, so he sets off walking.

27 INT. MARGARET'S APARTMENT - EARLY MORNING 27

Dawn is breaking as Henri finally catches sight of a high block of flats that stands out like a knife wound from the peaceful suburban scene. The door is open and Henri starts to climb the stairs, Outside Margaret's door he hesitates for a moment before pressing the buzzer. It rings for a long time before he hears a noise, then Margaret’s voice.

MARGARET
Who's there?

HENRI
It’s me, Henri.

MARGARET
Go away.

HENRI
I can’t.

Margaret opens the door and looks at the tired man standing outside. Henri walks straight into her arms. A kiss. They go in and the camera tries to follow, but the door is shut in its ”face”.

28 INT. MARGARET'S APARTMENT - MORNING 28

The day is a grey one, and rainy. Clad in a dressing gown, Margaret stands in front of the living room window, looking out. She has a cup of coffee in her hand, but she is not drinking. In his shirtsleeves, Henri sits at a square table in the middle of the room. Behind him is the open bedroom door, through which we Can see an unmade bed. The apartment is a prosaic one, albeit not untidy, if you know what I mean.

The atmosphere implies that Henri has just confessed something important, like having hired a contract killer to kill himself.

Margaret turns round and begins to pace up and down, avoiding Henri’s eyes; something in the photograph of a landscape by Constable, cut from a magazine, hanging on the wall seems to rivet his attention.

MARGARET
What about now, do you still want to die?

HENRI
No... Not any more.

MARGARET
Because you met me?

HENRI
Yes. That made me change my mind.

MARGARET
Only because my blue eyes.

HENRI
Are they blue?

He gets up, walks round the table, stops in front of Margaret, gazes intently at her left eye for a moment, seems to satisfy his Curiosity and returns to where he was before.

HENRI
Yes, they are.

MARGARET
Well, the matter is easily solved.

HENRI
How?

MARGARET
Go back to the bar and cancel the order.

Only gradually does the simplicity of the suggestion dawn on Henri. Then his eyes clear and he almost smiles.

HENRI
A wonderful idea... You're so wise, Margaret.

MARGARET
They probably won't return the money, but I don’t think that matters.

HENRI
No... Except that...

MARGARET
I'll loan you the tube fare.

HENRI
I didn’t mean that. I thought that we could perhaps start seeing each other.. later. I'm out of a job, you know.

MARGARET
This may sound strange, but these things don’t matter to a woman. Meanwhile, you go back to the bar and cancel the deal, and I'll go to your apartment and fetch some of your things. After all, the murderer doesn’t know me.

29 INT. "HONOLULU BAR" - DAY 29

Henri is like a new man as he walks through the East End streets to the "Honolulu Bar”. He almost whistles "Underneath the Apple Tree” as he walks. However, we must forgive him his excitement and remind ourselves that this is his first love.

Briskly he walks round the last corner only to see that the "Honolulu Bar” no longer exists. The whole block has been torn down.

30 EXT./INT. HENRI'S APARTMENT - DAY 30

Margaret walks across the street, fishes out the key Henri has given her, and enters the apartment. Standing in front of the newspaper stand round the corner, a man of about fifty raises his newspaper to cover his face again.

Five minutes later Margaret emerges again, a small brown bag in her hand, and walks to a bus stop some twenty metres away. The killer folds the newspaper under his arm and walks nonchalantly after her. The bus takes a long time to come. At the bus stop there are some twenty people. The killer stands right behind Margaret, immersed in his newspaper. When the bus comes, they all get on and, true to habit, the killer sits down beside Margaret. As the bus is almost full, there is nothing strange about this. Absentmindedly, Margaret glances at the man sitting next to her, at his gloved hands and the newspaper, in which he seems to be reading the funny pages.

Then she turns to look out of the windows and sinks deep into her thoughts, looking at the houses rushing by. After many years, she, too, seems to have discovered something new in life. She smiles to herself, but at what, we shall never know.

31 INT. MARGARET'S HOUSE - DAY 31

In Harrow Road, Margaret murmurs to the man sitting next to her and gets off. She does not notice that he gets off too. The block of flats is about 200 metres from the bus stop. The man gives her a fifty metre lead before lazily walking in the same direction. When Margaret has entered the building, he increases his speed and steps into the stairwell just as the lift is taking off.

Above the lift door is a floor indicator. Seeing the lift stop at the eleventh floor, the man lights a cigarette and then, relaxed, goes back towards the bus stop.

32 EXT. THE KILLER'S APARTMENT - AFTERNOON 32

The killer opens a rusty gate leading to a courtyard and walks by garbage cans in dire need of emptying to a door set in a low, dilapidated rear building, opens the door and steps in.

The room has a low ceiling, it smells musty and it is dark; the only window faces the direction from which the sun will never shine. The man sits down on the edge of an unmade bed, his overcoat still on, lights another cigarette and stares for a moment straight ahead.

Suddenly he gets up and walks to a chest of drawers in the corner of the room. From beneath the paper lining of the top drawer he takes out a brown envelope which he sets down on a table covered with dirty dishes and leftover food. From the envelope he takes a bundle of notes and a photograph of Henri. Having separated approximately twenty pounds from the notes, he replaces the envelope in the drawer.

Suddenly the man gets a terrible fit of coughing that almost doubles him up. He manages to find a dirty handkerchief in his pocket and pushes it in front of his mouth. When the fit has passed, he goes up to the window and examines the handkerchief almost curiously. On it are thick spots of dark blood.

Looking mildly discontented, he shoves the handkerchief back into his pocket, goes to his bed and takes an old-fashioned revolver from under the pillow, a silencer and a thin loop of piano wire with padded handles at both ends.

Having pushed these tools of his trade in his pockets, he walks out and closes the door behind him at the precise moment afternoon is turning into evening.

33 INT. MARGARET'S APARTMENT - EVENING 33

The remains of a meal lie on the kitchen table. The table has been cleared and Henri and Margaret are playing poker using matchsticks. Judging from the gargantuan pile on the table in front of Margaret, where there is also an almost burned-out candle, she has already won most of the matchsticks. Both of them are concentrating on the game, not a word is uttered until Henri discovers the packet of cigarettes is empty while groping for another cigarette. He gets up, picks up his blazer from the back of the chair and rummages through its pockets, in vain. Questioningly, he looks at Margaret.

HENRI
You don’t happen to have...

MARGARET
You're smoking too much as it is, Henri.

HENRI
If you really think so I'll stop smoking tomorrow, but...

MARGARET
There's a shop on the next corner.

HENRI
I'll take the cards with me.

MARGARET
Why?

HENRI
Because I don’t trust you.

He collects the deck of cards from the table and shoves it in his pocket. Then he takes his overcoat and walks to the door. There he turns and watches the woman passionately.

HENRI
Parting is so difficult.

MARGARET
Want me to come with you?

HENRI
Separation makes you miss me, and that is good.

MARGARET
Go now.

Henri opens the door and steps into the stairwell. The lift is on their floor. He enters the lift and presses the button for the ground floor.

34 EXT. MARGARET'S APARTMENT - EVENING 34

Meanwhile, downstairs, the killer opens the door leading to the house, steps into the stairwell and looks at the lifts indicator light. The lift is coming down. The killer shoves his hands into his pockets and starts to ascend the stairs. When he gets to the second floor the lift stops on the ground floor and Henri disappears into the street. The killer hears his footsteps but does not pay any attention to them and continues to walk up the stairs. On the fourth floor he pauses to rest, and again on the seventh.

Finally he reaches the eleventh floor, where there are two doors leading to apartments. One probably bears the name Griffith, the other something else. He presses the buzzer of the latter.

35 INT. MARGARET'S APARTMENT - EVENING 35

Margaret gets up and opens the door. An unfamiliar, brusque-looking man steps in with a gun in his hand, pushes her coldly aside and closes the door behind him.

He does not pay any attention to the dazed Margaret, but walks across the room to the bedroom door, opens it, looks inside, then into the bathroom, and then comes to stand in front of her.

MARGARET
He doesn’t live here.

THE KILLER
Sit down.

Without waiting for the effect of his recommendation, the man shoves Margaret into an armchair, sitting himself down on a small couch opposite in such way that he can simultaneously keep an eye on both her and the door.

THE KILLER
Who doesn’t live here? How do you know who I'm looking for?

MARGARET
I don’t, I'm living alone. Go away or I'll call the police.

THE KILLER
A bit difficult... without a telephone. He'll be back soon. I'll wait.

36 INT. A SHOP ROUND THE CORNER - EVENING 36

The salesgirl wraps up a bunch of carnations for Henri, who is waiting, money in hand, on the other side of the counter. He has obviously decided to make a good impression on Margaret right from the start, and he has read that a bunch of flowers every now and then cannot go amiss.

37 INT. MARGARET'S APARTMENT - EVENING 37

Understandably enough, no conversation has developed between Margaret and the killer. He has had another mild fit of coughing, and when it has passed, he has remained sitting motionless, staring at the floor over the barrel of his gun. Margaret is thinking as well as she can in her panic. Over and over again her eyes rest on a heavy vase on the table between them, but the distance is too great for her to try anything.

From the stairwell, the sound of the lift approaching. It stops on their floor, the door opens and closes, a few steps stop outside the apartment. The killer raises his expressionless eyes towards the door.

When the doorbell rings, the events follow fast: The man takes a silencer from his pocket, screws it in place, gets up and walks to the door. At the same time, Margaret reaches out, grabs the vase, gets up, steps behind the man and, with all her strength, hits him on the back of his head with the vase just as he moves the gun to his left hand and grabs the doorknob.

Without making any sound, the man collapses on the floor. The vase has missed slightly, but it has fulfilled its function. Margaret grabs her overcoat, her handbag and Henri's overcoat, opens the door and pushes the astonished Henri straight back into the lift. The apartment door remains open.

38 INT. A HOTEL, THE RECEPTION - EVENING 38

The hotel in whose lobby Margaret and Henri find themselves has seen better days. The only star that ever graced the hotel sign has come loose over the years and fallen onto the pavement, from where rain has probably washed it down into the sewer. A burnt-out butt hangs from the corner of the mouth of a thin man standing behind the reception desk.

This is not the only thing that has gone out in him, but he is nevertheless sufficiently on top of the situation to charge the couple £20 in advance and push a key into Margaret's hand. It would be ideal for archaeological excavations. Having made a gesture whose purpose is to point at the stairs, the thin man once again concentrates on his magazine, the cover of which promises football pools tips on the principle of "You cannot lose".

39 INT. A HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT 39

Margaret puts the withered flowers in a water jug she has discovered somewhere. Henri sits in the only armchair of the cheap room, watching her.

MARGARET
I didn't thank you for the flowers.

HENRI
You like them?... I never bought any before. It was difficult to choose but the saleswoman helped me.

MARGARET
Was it the dark one?

HENRI
Who?

MARGARET
The saleswoman.

HENRI
I don’t remember, I didn’t pay any attention. Why?

MARGARET
Oh, I was just asking. You have to go to the police.

HENRI
What shall I tell them?

MARGARET
Tell them that you hired a killer and now you're having second thoughts... I guess that doesn’t sound too good...

Henri stares at Margaret with a strange glow in his eyes.

In the distance thunder rumbles. Douglas Sirk turns silently in his grave as they both take a step at each other and fall on the bed. Later, only the moon sheds light on the scene.

MARGARET
You're crazy, Henri.

HENRI
I can’t help myself.

40 INT. A DOCTOR’S CONSULTING ROOM - DAY 40

The killer sits in a doctor’s consulting room. Behind the desk sits a man resembling a sad rat. He is wearing some hair on his forehead and a white doctor’s coat. He is examining an X-ray photo against a noisy, flickering fluorescent light. From the decor in the room one can draw the conclusion that it would be useless to try to find his clientele on the pages of Debrett.

The killer has buttoned up his shirt and put his jacket on. With a sigh he gets up, walks round the doctor’s desk, pulls open the top drawer and takes out an opened bottle of scotch, Having poured the liquid into two dirty glasses, he takes his glass and goes to the window hidden behind the blinds, slowly swirling the drink round in his glass.

THE KILLER
Shoot, Frank.

FRANK
What do you want to hear?

THE KILLER
The truth.

FRANK
It’s not very pretty.

THE KILLER
How much do I have?

The doctor picks up his glass and empties it so violently down his throat that some of the drink runs out of the corners of his mouth.

FRANK
I'll need to do a biopsy and...

The killer walks up to the little man, grabs his collar with one hand and lifts him up.

THE KILLER
How much?

FRANK
A month... Two at the most.

The killer releases his hold and the man collapses back onto his couch. The killer returns to the window, talking almost to himself.

THE KILLER
That should be enough.

FRANK
For what?

THE KILLER
I'm in the middle of a job. I've already Spent some of the money.

FRANK
Do you believe in God, Harry?

THE KILLER
I don’t know. Why do you ask?

FRANK
Because if you don't, there is no hell, either.

THE KILLER
You take what you can.

41 INT. A HOTEL ROOM - DAY 41

Henri Boulanger is restless. He walks round the small hotel room, distressed like a trapped rabbit. His conscience is bothering him because of Margaret, his being unemployed, penniless and generally useless. Once again he curses the day he was born, changing his mind when he suddenly remembers Margaret and her roses. In order to do at least something to solve the unbearable situation, he picks up his coat and goes out.

42 EXT. A STREET, "THE RED LION" - DAY 42

At the hotel door, Henri peers both left and right before he dares to get out. As he wants to be "incognito" when it comes to the killer, he stops at the first kiosk to buy a cheap pair of sunglasses behind which he hides his fearful eyes that might give him away. Like Henri said himself, he is not a very brave man.

Having wandered aimlessly around in the streets for a while he enters a pub called "The Red Lion", from which music issues. He orders a glass of mineral water and remains at the bar drinking it, watching a young man near the door singing and playing the guitar. The man looks as if he could perfectly well play Elvis in some mediocre American film. The doors are open to the street and the eternal contrast of the everyday street and the superficial poetic quality of the bar – something that always fascinates all drinking people – is complete.

Henri, however, is not in the slightest interested in thoughts such as these. He has suddenly seen Al and Pete, his acquaintances from the "Honolulu Bar", standing at the other end of the long bar. At the same time Al and Pete finish their drinks, determined, and exit to the street. Ten paces behind them Henri emerges, only to see them enter a jeweller's on the corner. Without stopping to think, Henri hurries after them.

43 INT. THE JEWELLER'S - DAY 43

Henri steps into the shop. Al is standing behind the counter, holding the barrel of a small handgun almost against the back of the head of an old jeweller. The man is kneeling on the floor, opening a safe set in the wall. At the other end of the counter, Pete is shovelling watches and jewellery from the display cases into a black pouch.

Just as Henri enters the shop, the jeweller opens the safe and an alarm goes off somewhere outside. Al and Pete turn to look at Henri. The jeweller moves surprisingly fast: He turns round and grabs Al's gun hand. While they struggle, the gun goes off and the bullet hits the man in the chest. Pete swears obscenely and runs to the door, the pouch in his hand. Al jumps over the counter, shoves the gun into Henri's hand and follows his partner.

Paralysed, Henri stares first at the gun in his hand, then at the jeweller lying on the floor, the bloodstain on his chest growing slowly larger. He hears a buzz from the ceiling and turns to look straight into a surveillance camera that seems to move extremely slowly towards his face, hidden behind the dark glasses. The alarm continues ringing. People start to gather round the shop. Suddenly Henri takes off, opens the back door of the shop and runs into the yard. Dropping the gun in a garbage can, he disappears into a side street.

44 EXT. A NEWSSTAND, A FAST FOOD RESTAURANT - EVENING 44

A newspaper van slows down as it approaches a newsstand on the pavement, and the mate throws a bundle of evening papers to an old man, who lifts it onto the counter, cuts the string and removes the wrapping, revealing a headline that fills the whole front page: "Jeweller fights for life". Beneath it, in smaller type: "Robbers still on the loose", besides which there is a high-angle photograph of Henri standing with his dark glasses on, gun in hand, in the middle of the jeweller's shop, staring directly at the camera. Beneath the photograph is the caption: "Where is this man? One of the robbers of Whitechapel Road."

Via on old-fashioned cross fade we move into the same front page in front of a man leaning over a table in a scruffy fast food parlour. The small restaurant is almost full. The door opens, and in comes Margaret with a bunch of roses in her hand. Reluctantly, she offers them at a couple of tables, finally stopping beside the man leaning over the newspaper.

MARGARET
Some roses for your wife, sir.

The man raises his head to look at Margaret. She recognises the killer as quickly as he recognises her. The man stands up.

THE KILLER
No thank you, miss.

He turns and exits into the street through a door behind him. The rain seems to be coming down even harder. Feebly, Margaret sinks down on the chair, only to realise that she is staring at Henri's photograph on the front page of the newspaper. Hastily she reads the captions and rushes out after the killer. He is standing in the rain outside, so she almost falls into his arms.

THE KILLER
Where is he?

MARGARET
I don't know... I thought you'd know.

The man grabs her firmly by the wrist.

MARGARET
Listen... He doesn't want to die after all...

THE KILLER
Nobody wants to, but die they must.

The look in the man's eyes is sick, glassy. In vain Margaret tries to pry her hand loose.

MARGARET
Let me go or I'll scream.

She says it so loud that the passersby turn to look. Slowly the man releases his hold. Margaret steps into the street and gets into a passing cab.

45 EXT. HOTEL - EVENING 45

Margaret walks along the pavement, a bunch of unsold flowers under her arm, towards the poorly lit hotel entrance. In the lobby, the receptionist hands her the key and a note. Margaret looks worried as she climbs the stairs to her room, opens and closes the door and sits down in the armchair to read the note.

When she's finished reading, she drops the letter on the floor, hides her face in her hands and cries with scarcely a sound.

46 EXT. RAILWAY BRIDGE - NIGHT 46

Down below, three pairs of shining rails can be seen. The sound of a train approaching.

Henri stands on the handrail of the bridge, holding on to the wire net behind him with his right hand and staring in the direction of the approaching train. The train dives forth. Henri closes his eyes and his fingers slowly loosen their grip on the fence. The train whistles and starts slowing down.

47 INT. PUB - EVENING 47

Margaret sits at a corner table of a noisy pub, alone and lost in thought. Roy Brown is singing “Trouble at Midnight” on the jukebox. Margaret puts her cigarette down, empties her glass, takes her coat and walks out of the frame.

48 INT. HOTEL LOBBY - EVENING 48

Looking desperate, Margaret enters the hotel lobby. She asks for her key from the man in whose mouth the burnt-out cigarette end seems to be stuck for eternity. Instead of giving her the key, the man stares intently at her.

MAN
I know what you think of me. You think I'm a rude, inhuman and cold person. Everybody hates receptionists, doormen and police. You think I'm not good for anything, you think that I don’t see or understand anything. You're looking for your man. Him.

From behind the reception desk, he picks up a newspaper with Henri’s photograph on the front page, drops it in front of Margaret. She looks at him, tired.

MARGARET
Please give me the keys. Unless you want that I really hate you.

MAN
You'll get it all right. I know where your man is. I saw him today when I visited my mother’s grave in Hampstead Cemetery...

The camera moves to the front door window, where the calm, rain-soaked face of the Killer can be seen. He cannot hear what the receptionist is telling Margaret, but he does understand something.

When Margaret finally takes her key and almost runs upstairs, the killer opens the door, enters the lobby and walks towards the man behind the reception desk. On the receptionist’s face, a look of fear for something that we don't see spreads slowly.

49 INT. HOTEL ROOM & LOBBY - EVENING 49

In her room, Margaret hastily brushes her wet hair and puts on some dry clothes. She is so excited that she fails to wonder where the receptionist has disappeared to.

50 INT. A GRILL - NIGHT 50

Against the wall of Hampstead Cemetery leans a small dilapidated one-storey building with a grill advertising its business in a handwritten sign like this: "Hamburgers, Hot Dogs, Coffee And Ales”. The neighbourhood is uninhabited and desolate, but from the grill window streams pale neon light into the steady, soaking rain.

A taxicab emerges from the darkness and stops outside the grill, Margaret gets out of the cab and pays the fare.

The cab drives off. Margaret steps into the grill through turquoise swing doors, the glass panes of which have been replaced with dull plastic. Inside there is not a single customer, but behind the counter stands a man of about fifty with an ample stomach, wearing a sleeveless T-shirt, an apron round his waist and a filterless cigarette in the corner of his mouth. Inquiringly, he looks at Margaret. She stands by the door, looking round as if searching for something.

MAN
What'll it be for you, Lady?

Margaret looks disappointed. Slowly, she sits down at a table near the window.

MARGARET
A hamburger and coffee.

The man opens a hatch in the back wall and shouts through it.

MAN
Hamburger, please! And coffee.

Then he picks up a cup and fills it with coffee. A two-minute time jump.

Margaret drinks her coffee in silence and the man focuses his attention on a torn magazine when the kitchen door opens and out steps Henri, in his hand a plate on which rests a miserable-looking hamburger surrounded by half-burned onion rings. Margaret raises her eyes as Henri walks towards her, smiling sadly.

HENRI
Your order, Miss.

He places the plate on the table and sits down opposite her. They have established what is known as eye contact.

51 INT. BACK ROOM OF THE GRILL - MORNING 51

The sun has emerged in the morning sky by the time Henri carefully sits up on the edge of the bed, trying not to wake the sleeping Margaret. The bed stands in the corner of a back room a few metres wide crammed with crates of beer and soft drinks, and other junk. Henri lights a cigarette, gets up, opens the back door and steps out. The grill has been built right into the cemetery wall so that its back door opens straight onto the cemetery, beside a maintenance building and a tool shed. The morning sun draws out the shadows of the crosses, long and peaceful. Henri sits down on a bench, leaning back against the wall. All is quiet.

Halfway through the cigarette, Margaret emerges at the doorway, takes a look at the cemetery and sits down beside him. For a moment, neither of them says anything. Then Margaret looks at Henri.

MARGARET
You shouldn't have left me, Henri.

HENRI
I shouldn’t have been born at all.

MARGARET
Let's go away. Together.

HENRI
Where to?

MARGARET
France.

HENRI
No, not there.

MARGARET
France first, then somewhere else.

HENRI
What about the Customs?

MARGARET
Nobody will recognise you, the photograph was so poor.

HENRI
Do you want to leave your home?

MARGARET
The working class has no fatherland.

HENRI
All right then.

MARGARET
We'll leave tonight. I'll go and pack some of my things and buy the tickets. Meet me at the station at nine o'clock.

Thoughtfully, Henri nods and stares ahead of him. The cemetery is peaceful. If one ignores a lone gravedigger working on a small hillock a couple of hundred metres away.

52 EXT. POLICE STATION - AFTERNOON 52

A police van comes to halt in front of a police station. Handcuffed to each other, Al and Pete are brought into the duty room. One of the police officers escorting them places a black pouch on the desk and opens it to reveal a collection of jewellery and watches.

POLICE OFFICER
They were caught hawking these.

53 INT. THE KILLER'S APARTMENT - AFTERNOON 53

The killer lies full-length on his bed, smoking a cigarette and staring at the ceiling. A young girl of about sixteen is washing up in a washtub on the only table in the room. She glances at the unopened cans of food and then at the silent man lying on the bed.

GIRL
You haven't eaten a thing again, dad.

The man does not answer. He gets up and goes to the chest of drawers.

From the top drawer he takes out a bundle of notes and walks towards her. She is wiping her hands, having finished the washing up. He shoves the money into her hand.

THE KILLER
Give this to your mother. And don’t come here again.

GIRL
Bad...

THE KILLER
I don’t need any help.

GIRL
But...

THE KILLER
Get going. I've got work to do.

The unkind tone of his voice almost makes her cry, but she obediently puts the notes in the pocket of her overcoat and leaves. The man puts on his overcoat.

54 INT. THE RAILWAY STATION - EVENING 54

Margaret stands in the ticket office of the railway station. The booking clerk pushes the tickets through the slot. Margaret leaves the queue, looks at the large clock high up on the wall. A quarter to seven. It is already dark outside. Nervously, Margaret takes a few steps, stopping then as if struck by lightning as she notices the poster on the wall of the newsstand. The headline screams: "Whitechapel Murderers Caught. The Third Man Innocent.” Underneath are photographs of Al and Pete and a smaller one of Henri, the one printed in the papers earlier. Margaret almost grabs the paper from the hand of the news vendor, reads the story for a moment. Then, clearly pleased and happy, she rushes to the exit.

55 INT. A TAXICAB - EVENING 55

Margaret sits in the cab, anxiously looking at her watch. It is rush hour and the cab keeps getting held up.

56 INT. THE GRILL IN HAMPSTEAD - EVENING 56

In the back room, Henri puts on his overcoat, casts a farewell glance at the room and walks into the bar. The bald-headed man throws his magazine aside, gets up and puts out his hand.

MAN
Au revoir, Henri.

HENRI
Au revoir, Vic.

The door opens and the killer steps in. Henri walks round the bar and starts towards the door, when he suddenly stops. The Killer has drawn out a gun and stares expressionlessly at Henri. Henri, who has not seen the man before, finally understands who he is. He backs, gets behind the bar. The killer follows him like a robot, a few steps behind. Henri turns round and steps into the kitchen. Vic steps in front of the killer, but he strikes him away like an old glove with the hand holding the gun. Vic crashes down behind the bar. The killer follows Henri, who has escaped into the cemetery through the back door.

57 EXT. THE CEMETERY - EVENING 57

In the middle of the cemetery stands a small church, almost in ruins, and there Henri looks for cover. Finally he cautiously steps out of a hole in the wall, only to find himself face to face with the killer leaning on the wall. For a moment, they watch each other. Not a word is uttered. Suddenly, the killer gets another of his horrible coughing fits and with his free hand produces a handkerchief from his overcoat pocket.

At last the fit passes, he puts the handkerchief back into his pocket and raises his eyes again to Henri, who has waited there without making a move.

THE KILLER
Cancer... I'll be gone in a few weeks' time.

HENRI
I'm sorry.

THE KILLER
Why? It'll get me out of here.

HENRI
Don't you like it here?

THE KILLER
No, I'm a loser.

HENRI
This time you won.

THE KILLER
That’s what you think. Life is a disappointment.

He takes the gun out of his pocket and points it at Henri. A long, expressionless look.

THE KILLER
Goodbye.

Suddenly, he turns the gun and points it at his chest, at the spot where the heart is, and fires. Henri’s face expresses a certain astonishment as he looks at the lifeless man lying on the ground. Only after a while does he slowly leave the place.

Margaret sits in the cab and looks nervously at the back of the driver’s neck.

MARGARET
Faster!

The driver accelerates until he sees a small man stepping out of the cemetery gate and into the street, right in front of the car. The viewer immediately recognizes him as Henri Boulanger. Margaret screams and hides her face, the driver brakes violently with the look of astonishment of a man who could never have caused an accident. When everything is over, Margaret opens the door and runs to the nose of the car, only to find that Henri is standing, intact, an inch away from the front bumper. They look at each other. Fadeout. Music. An image of Vic wiping his glasses in the corner of the grill.

THE END